

JIM PATON

Nomination for an Award of Merit

Jim Paton graduated from the University of Western Australia and has a Diploma from Imperial College, London. He practised as a structural engineer, and worked for 22 years with the Perth Water Authority, including 10 years as Chief Design Engineer, before moving into consulting.

When he was Deputy Chairman of the WA Division in 1978, Jim formed the WA Engineering Heritage Panel and he chaired the Panel for its first six years. His retiring address as Division Chairman centred on WA's engineering heritage.

As Chairman of the WA Division, he was responsible for organising the 1979 Annual Engineering Conference in Perth, celebrating the Institution's Diamond Jubilee year and the State's 150th Anniversary. It attracted over 1400 delegates. Having attended a National Trust industrial heritage seminar in Goulburn, Jim made WA's engineering heritage an important feature of the conference at the Perth Concert Hall. On the forecourt hardware items of engineering heritage significance were set out and over 800 historic photographs were displayed in the foyer.

Under Jim's continuing leadership, the Heritage Panel published histories on the early Perth water supplies and research on the Goldfields pipeline.

From the beginning Jim was WA's representative on the National Panel on Engineering Heritage (now Engineering Heritage Australia) during its formative activities. He helped to develop the Institution's approach to engineering heritage with Professor Ray Whitmore, Denis Cumming, Professor Crawford and others.

Remaining a WA Panel member since its inception, Jim with the late Denis Cumming promoted the involvement of engineers in the conduct of heritage assessments for applied technology projects. Often he was the only engineer carrying out conservation management plans in WA. He has been lead consultant for a number of such assessments, and has prepared many heritage studies leading to listing on the State Heritage Register.

Being concerned about the limited number of engineers with heritage expertise, Jim prepared a strong submission in support of Engineers Australia recognising a category of engineers proficient in heritage matters.

Jim has presented papers to engineering heritage conferences and is a member of the organising committee for the 2007 Engineering Heritage Conference in Perth. Through local and national engagement he has made a significant contribution to the conservation of engineering heritage in Australia over the last 30 years.